

## CHAPTER 2 HOUSING

This Chapter provides data intended to help evaluate the adequacy and suitability of the City's existing housing stock to serve current and future needs. The Census Bureau for the Decennial Census reports some data for 100 percent of the housing units (SF1), while other statistics are based on sampling (SF3). Where available, this chapter reports data available for 100 percent of the housing stock in Sandy Springs in 2000.

### TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

The Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) had a total of 42,794 housing units in 2000, according to the U.S. Census (SF 3, Table H3). Sample statistics show the total housing unit count in 2000 as 42,744 units (SF 3, Table H1).

Projections of housing units have been prepared for purposes of the comprehensive plan. Table 2.1 provides short-term housing unit projections, and Table 2.2 provides long-term housing unit projections.

**Table 2.1**  
**Housing Unit Estimates and Short-Term Projections, 2005-2012**  
**City of Sandy Springs**

<b>City of Sandy Springs</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Total Housing Units	44,411	44,545	44,679	44,813	45,212	45,346

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. September 2006.

**Table 2.2**  
**Housing Unit Projections, 2015-2030**  
**City of Sandy Springs**

<b>City of Sandy Springs</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2030</b>
Total Housing Units	45,745	46,412	47,078	47,345	47,745

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. September 2006.

The housing unit projections also form the basis for projections of population and total households (see Chapter 1 of this Technical Appendix). As with the population, these projections are considerably lower than those projected in the Focus Fulton 2025 plan and the interim comprehensive plan for Sandy Springs, due to considerable constraints on land supply. The vast majority of new housing units in Sandy Springs are likely to be built as a result of redevelopment, rather than the development of vacant land which is increasingly scarce. Total housing units will increase in Sandy Springs from 2006 to 2030 by a net 3,200 units. Note that some housing units will be demolished (as is currently the case and planned in the future in Sandy Springs), so the total number of housing starts during that planning horizon will be considerably higher than the "net" increase.

## TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS

Sandy Springs is well known for its outstanding residential neighborhoods which are dominated by detached, single-family residences. Sandy Springs' housing stock as of 2000, however, was dominated by multiple-family units, as shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3**  
**Types of Housing Units, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

Type of Unit	Number of Units	%
One Family, Detached	14,374	33.6%
One Family, Attached	2,881	6.7%
Multiple Family	25,466	59.6%
Mobile Home	23	0.1%
Total	42,744	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H30.

The preponderance of apartment units in Sandy Springs has been an issue with the citizenry and its elected officials. Some believe that Sandy Springs has too many apartment units or an unfair share of them. Because much of the future development in Sandy Springs is likely to occur via redevelopment at higher densities than have been constructed historically, it is likely that a significant amount (if not the vast majority) of the additional housing units constructed will be multi-family types (apartments and condominiums). At issue is whether the comprehensive plan can and should attempt to alter the mix of housing unit types to reduce the number of apartments. While some citizens and elected officials may want to reduce the number of apartments, the addition of smaller, perhaps more affordable housing units within the context of redevelopment has certain advantages with respect to the supply of housing for low- and moderate-income groups and disadvantaged persons. The issue of types of housing units deserves discussion during the preparation of the Community Agenda.

## OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY

Table 2.4 shows the number and percentage of occupied and vacant housing units for Sandy Springs in 2000, along with figures for the State of Georgia.

**Table 2.4**  
**Housing Occupancy and Vacancy, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) and Georgia**

Jurisdiction	Occupied Units	% of Total Units	Vacant Units	% of Total Units	Total Units
Sandy Springs CDP	39,288	91.8%	3,506	8.2%	42,794
State of Georgia	3,006,369	91.6%	275,368	8.4%	3,281,737

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, Table H3).

The overall vacancy rate for the housing stock in Sandy Springs in 2000 was 8.2 percent, slightly lower than the state's housing stock.

The status of vacant housing units is shown in Table 2.5. Nearly two-thirds of the vacant housing units in Sandy Springs in 2000 were for rent. Only 376 of the vacant units in Sandy Springs in 2000 were detached, single family (10.7 percent of all vacant units). The vast majority of the vacant housing units in 2000 were in large multi-family complexes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF 3, Table H31).

**Table 2.5**  
**Vacant Housing Units by Vacancy Status, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

<b>Vacancy Status</b>	<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	<b>Percent of All Vacant Units</b>
For rent	2,254	64.0%
For sale only	593	16.9%
Rented or sold, not occupied	248	7.0%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	346	9.8%
For migrant workers	6	0.1%
Other vacant	78	2.2%
Total vacant	3,525	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H8.

## **TENURE**

Tenure refers to owner versus renter-occupancy. Sandy Springs' occupied housing stock in 2000 was majority renter-occupied, as shown in Table 2.6. That finding contrasts sharply with the State's housing stock in 2000, which was two-thirds owner occupied.

**Table 2.6**  
**Occupied Housing Units by Tenure, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) and State of Georgia**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Owner-Occupied Units</b>	<b>% of Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>Renter-Occupied Units</b>	<b>% of Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>Total Occupied Units</b>
Sandy Springs CDP	17,945	45.7%	21,343	54.3%	39,288
State of Georgia	2,029,293	67.5%	977,076	32.5%	3,006,369

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000 (SF1, Table H4).

Table 2.7 shows the types of housing units in Sandy Springs in 2000 cross-tabulated by tenure. Three-quarters (74.6 percent) of owner-occupied housing units in Sandy Springs in 2000 were single-family detached units. Multi-family units comprised nearly all (95 percent) of the renter-occupied units in Sandy Springs in 2000; rental occupancy of detached or attached single-family housing units was not a significant trend in 2000 in the city.

**Table 2.7**  
**Types of Housing Units by Tenure, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

Type of Unit	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied	
	Units	%	Units	%
One Family, Detached	13,346	74.6%	652	3.1%
One Family, Attached	2,355	13.2%	402	1.9%
Multiple Family	2,172	12.1%	20,269	95.0%
Mobile Home	14	0.1%	9	0.0%
Total	17,887	100%	21,332	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H32.

Table 2.8 shows average household size for owner-occupied and renter-occupied units in Sandy Springs in 2000, compared with the state. Owner-occupied housing units have larger average household sizes than renter-occupied units. In Sandy Springs in 2000, the average household size for renter-occupied housing units was less than two persons, considerably lower than renter-occupied households in the state as a whole, as of the year 2000.

**Table 2.8**  
**Average Household Size by Tenure, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) and State of Georgia**  
**(Persons Per Unit, Occupied Housing Units)**

Jurisdiction	Persons Per Unit Owner-Occupied Housing Units	Persons Per Unit Renter-Occupied Housing Units
Sandy Springs CDP	2.45	1.93
State of Georgia	2.76	2.49

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000, SF3, Table H18.

Table 2.9 cross-tabulates the number of rooms in occupied housing units by tenure, and Table 2.10 cross-tabulates the number of bedrooms in occupied housing units by tenure, for Sandy Springs in 2000. As indicated in Table 2.9, the smallest homes tend to be occupied by renters, while the largest homes tend to be occupied by homeowners. The same finding holds true when one considers the number of bedrooms (see Table 2.10), rather than total number of rooms. Almost 20 percent of the homes in Sandy Springs in 2000 were very large (9 or more rooms, see Table 2.9). Approximately one-quarter of the homes in Sandy Springs in 2000 were four or more bedrooms (Table 2.10).

**Table 2.9**  
**Occupied Housing Units by Number of Rooms by Tenure, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

Number of Rooms in Units	Owner-Occupied Housing Units		Renter-Occupied Housing Units		Total Occupied Housing Units	
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%
1 room	47	0.3%	857	4.0%	904	2.3%
2 rooms	147	0.8%	2,765	13.0%	2,912	7.4%
3 rooms	339	1.9%	4,950	23.2%	5,289	13.5%
4 rooms	792	4.4%	5,875	27.5%	6,667	17.0%
5 rooms	1,661	9.3%	4,564	21.4%	6,225	15.9%
6 rooms	2,121	11.9%	1,633	7.7%	3,754	9.6%
7 rooms	2,535	14.2%	421	2.0%	2,956	7.5%
8 rooms	2,745	15.3%	95	0.4%	2,840	7.2%
9 or more rooms	7,500	41.9%	172	0.8%	7,672	19.6%
Total	17,887	100%	21,332	100%	39,219	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H26.

**Table 2.10**  
**Occupied Housing Units by Bedrooms by Tenure, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

Number of Bedrooms in Units	Owner-Occupied Housing Units		Renter-Occupied Housing Units		Total Occupied Housing Units	
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%
No bedroom	47	0.3%	874	4.1%	921	2.3%
1 bedroom	538	3.0%	8,330	39.0%	8,868	22.6%
2 bedrooms	2,768	15.5%	9,792	45.9%	12,560	32.0%
3 bedrooms	4,678	26.2%	2,070	9.7%	6,748	17.2%
4 bedrooms	6,214	34.7%	188	0.9%	6,402	16.3%
5 or more	3,642	20.4%	78	0.4%	3,720	9.5%
Total	17,887	100%	21,332	100%	39,219	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H42.

## AGE

The age of homes is not in itself an indicator of poor condition. Older homes are sometimes better constructed than newer ones, and the overall condition of homes depends on the amount of upkeep and maintenance by the owners. As homes age, however, more upkeep is needed, and if occupancy goes to renter rather than owner-occupied status, maintenance tends to get deferred. If homes are too old, then it may not make good economic sense to upgrade them. Homes built in the 1960s and 1970s tend to be substantially smaller than those constructed in later decades.

Table 2.11 shows Sandy Springs' year-2000 housing stock according to year constructed. The median age of the housing stock in Sandy Springs as of 2000 was 1982, and almost one-third of all housing units in the city as of 2000 was constructed during the 1980s. More than one-fifth of the housing units as of 2000 were constructed in the 1970s. Sandy Springs has only a small percentage of very old (pre-1950) homes, but the housing stock contains a more significant percentage (6.2) of homes built during the 1950s. As noted above, homes built in prior decades tend to be much smaller in size, and hence older homes can become increasingly obsolete. That obsolescence often will lead either to conversion to rental occupancy, or in other cases demolition and replacement with a larger home.

**Table 2.11**  
**Age of Housing Units and**  
**Median Year Structure Built, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Built 1999 to March 2000	984	2.3%
Built 1995 to 1998	4,504	10.5%
Built 1990 to 1994	4,707	11.0%
Built 1980 to 1989	13,502	31.6%
Built 1970 to 1979	9,127	21.4%
Built 1960 to 1969	6,593	15.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	2,633	6.2%
Built 1940 to 1949	372	0.9%
Built 1939 or earlier	322	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,74</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Median Year Structure Built</b>	<b>1982</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H34 and H35.

## **CONDITION**

Two typical measures of substandard housing conditions are the number of housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities and the number of occupied housing units lacking complete kitchen facilities. In 2000 in Sandy Springs, there were 212 housing units that lacked complete plumbing facilities, representing only 0.5 percent of the total housing stock, about half that of the state's. There were only 145 occupied housing units lacking complete kitchen facilities (0.3% of occupied housing stock). Hence, condition is not considered to be a significant issue in Sandy Springs.

**Table 2.12**  
**Structural and Plumbing Characteristics of Housing Units, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) and State of Georgia**

<b>Housing Unit Characteristic</b>	<b>Sandy Springs CDP</b>	<b>State of Georgia</b>
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0.5%	1.0%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	0.3%	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, SF3, Tables H47 and H50).

## OVERCROWDING

Housing units are considered to be “overcrowded” if there is more than one person per room. Severely overcrowded is considered 1.51 or more persons per room. Table 2.13 shows statistics for overcrowded housing units by tenure in Sandy Springs in 2000. Crowded occupancies have not been an issue for owner-occupied housing units in Sandy Springs. However, for renter-occupied units crowding and severe overcrowding is much more significant. In fact, there are more severely overcrowded renter-occupied units than overcrowded renter-occupied units.

Overcrowding can be considered largely a function of a lack of affordable housing. The supply of affordable housing units has generally diminished over time, in part because household incomes have not kept pace with the inflation of housing purchase prices and rents. For that reason, it may become more of an issue in the future in Sandy Springs.

**Table 2.13**  
**Overcrowded Housing Units by Tenure, 2000**  
**Sandy Spring Census Designated Place (CDP)**

Occupants Per Room	Owner Occupied Housing Units		Renter Occupied Housing Units	
	Units	%	Units	%
1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room (overcrowded)	22	51.2%	575	40.7%
1.51 or more occupants per room (severely overcrowded)	21	48.8%	837	59.3%
Total overcrowded or severely overcrowded housing units	43	100%	1,412	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H20.

## VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED UNITS

Table 2.14 shows the median value of all-owner occupied housing units in Sandy Springs in 2000, as well as the number of housing units by range of value. More than one-half (60.8 percent) of all specified owner-occupied housing units in 2000 in Sandy Springs had a value of more \$300,000 or more. More than one-fifth (21.3 percent) of the specified, owner-occupied housing units in 2000 in Sandy Springs had values in the range of \$200,000 to \$299,000. Very few housing units had a value of under \$100,000.

As a basis of comparison, the median value of all owner-occupied housing units for Georgia’s housing stock in 2000 was \$100,600, for Roswell’s, \$204,700, and for Fulton County’s, \$175,800.

**Table 2.14**  
**Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

<b>Range of Value (\$)</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>% of Total Units</b>
Less than \$50,000	43	0.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	507	3.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,032	6.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,118	7.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	3,211	21.3%
\$300,00 or more	9,173	60.8%
Total Specified Units	15,084	100%
Median (all owner occupied units) (\$)	\$316,600	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H74 and H85.

## **GROSS RENT**

Table 2.15 shows ranges of gross rent paid by renter-occupied households in Sandy Springs in 2000, compared with the percentage in each rent range for Georgia. The data show that renting in Sandy Springs in 2000 was much more costly than in Georgia as a whole. There is a substantial difference in the year 2000 median gross rents of the city and state. Approximately 81% of the rental housing stock in Sandy Springs in the year 2000 had gross rents of \$750 or more. These data also show a significant lack of rental units in 2000 that were below the state median gross rent.

**Table 2.15**  
**Gross Rent, Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 2000**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) and State of Georgia**

<b>Gross Rent (\$)</b>	<b>Sandy Springs CDP</b>		<b>Georgia %</b>
	<b>Units</b>	<b>%</b>	
Less than \$250	307	1.5%	9.3%
\$250 to \$499	346	1.6%	25.5%
\$500 to \$749	3,345	15.9%	33.2%
\$750 to \$999	11,025	52.4%	22.1%
\$1000 or more	6,013	28.6%	9.9%
Total Units With Cash Rent	21,036	100%	100%
Median Gross Rent (\$)	\$892		\$613

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000, SF3, Tables H62 and H63.

## **COST BURDEN**

“Cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 30 percent of a household’s income for housing, and “severely cost burdened” is defined as paying more than 50 percent of a household’s income for housing.



Table 2.16 shows cost burden data for specified owner-occupied housing units in Sandy Springs in 2000. Approximately three-quarters (74.9 percent) of owner-occupied households in Sandy Springs in 2000 were not cost burdened. Approximately 14.3 percent were cost burdened and another 10.1 percent were severely cost burdened in 2000.

**Table 2.16**  
**Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 2000**  
**Specific Owner-Occupied Housing Units**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

<b>Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income</b>	<b>Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>% of Units Computed</b>
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	11,294	74.9%
30 to 49% (cost burdened)	2,159	14.3%
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	1,527	10.1%
Units not computed	104	0.7%
Total Specified Units	15,084	100%
Median Monthly Owner Cost as a Percentage of Household Income	18.1%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF3, Table H94 and H95.

Table 2.17 presents comparable cost burden data for specified renter-occupied units in Sandy Springs in 2000. As expected, the percentage of renter-occupied households that are cost burdened or severely cost burdened is higher than for owner-occupied households. Approximately 18.5 percent of rental households were cost burdened and another 14.3 percent were severely cost burdened in 2000. Together, approximately one out of three renter households experienced a cost burden or severe cost burden in 2000 in Sandy Springs.

**Table 2.17**  
**Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income, 2000**  
**Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units**  
**Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP)**

<b>Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income</b>	<b>Specified Renter-Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>% of Units Computed</b>
Less than 30% (not cost burdened)	13,742	64.5%
30 to 49% (cost burdened)	3,949	18.5%
50% or more (severely cost burdened)	3,054	14.3%
Units not computed	569	2.7%
Total Housing Units	21,314	100%
Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income	23.7%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. SF3. Table H69 and H70.

The relationship of housing costs to other characteristics, and special housing needs, are addressed in Chapter 3 of this technical appendix.

## JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

The desirable jobs-housing ratio of a given community is usually considered to be 1.5 jobs for each housing unit.<sup>1</sup> As of 2006, Sandy Springs had an estimated 85,981 jobs and an estimated 44,545 housing units. This computes to a current job-housing unit ratio of 1.93 : 1. That figure places Sandy Springs in the “job-rich” category. As the foregoing analysis indicates, Sandy Springs had a very high median housing value and high median gross rent in 2000. As a result, significant numbers of workers in some occupations (e.g., retail workers) probably cannot afford to live or rent in Sandy Springs. For instance, in the U.S., half of all retail sales persons made less than \$8.98 an hour in May 2004. Similarly, half of the cashiers were paid less than \$7.81 per hour nationally. Hourly wages for other heavily populated occupations ranged from \$7.40 to \$14.01.<sup>2</sup> People with such occupations may have a difficult time finding housing in Sandy Springs.

However, all job-rich communities have some difficulty balancing the needs of the work force with housing in the city. In the case of Sandy Springs, the employment mix favors professional jobs such as those in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors. Sandy Springs developed largely as an upper-income suburb of the Atlanta metropolitan area, and multi-family housing has been added in substantial quantities during the last two decades, although even the rental housing provided in Sandy Springs may be considered not affordable to many retail trade and service workers who live elsewhere but might otherwise desire to live in Sandy Springs. The housing affordability problem is more pervasive in Sandy Springs. In fact, it has been observed that “nowhere in the country can a family with one full-time minimum-wage worker (earning \$5.15 per hour) afford the cost of a two-bedroom apartment at the ‘fair-market’ rent (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom 2001).<sup>3</sup>

For an evaluation of barriers that may prevent a significant portion of the city’s nonresident work force from residing in Sandy Springs, see Chapter 3 of this technical appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> Weitz, Jerry. 2003. Jobs-Housing Balance. Planning Advisory Report No. 516. Chicago: American Planning Association.

<sup>2</sup> *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. June 1, 2005. “Bush still has a job ahead of him.” P. A-12 (editorial).

<sup>3</sup> Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom. 2001. *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-first Century*. University Press of Kansas. Cited in Weitz, Jerry. 2003. “Income Disparities, Economic Segregation, and the Role of Planners,” *Practicing Planner*, Vol. 2, No. 3.